

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION
TOWN OF SNOW HILL, MARYLAND

Work Session

4-7-2020

A work session with Mayor and Town Council of Snow Hill, Maryland was held via telephone conference due to the COVID-19 protocols on Tuesday April 7, 2020 with Mayor Weber presiding. The meeting was called to order at 4:30pm.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT

- Mayor Gary Weber
- Councilwoman Alison Gadoua
- Councilwoman Melisa Weidner
- Chief Andy McGee
- Jeré Johnson
- Margot Resto
- Melissa Etnoyer

Mayor: Notice that he will be Swearing in Ms. Regina Blake to the Western District Council Seat at next Town Meeting on 4-14-2020.

MEETING MINUTES

3-31-2020 motion to approve, seconded, approved with edits.

COVID-19

Jere Johnson - Task Force update, holding meetings, attending webinars, researching; applications for business owners, Unemployment starting to process things more, banks are offering deferment, not credit cards; our website has info for individuals, working on content for businesses – putting info out there for our citizens, CDC – says everyone should wear a mask; stimulus research

Chief McGee – 11 Wor Cty cases; 34 in county self-quarantined; comm on aging and bd of ed – 9700 meals per week through schools; in town – no issues with congregating, managers of stores are doing a good job of limiting; peak in next 7-10 days, seems people are heeding warnings best they can, if see violation, educate; have PPE for month, trying to keep supply chain moving

Mayor – mixed signals, peak being in next 7-10 days, MD of Health – not looking for big peak until mid-June – McGee have an idea where that came from?

McGee – based on ground zero, we’re 2 weeks behind them, people fled NY, Governor is estimated number – start seeing increasing if we don’t do social distancing, moving target, could be 7-30 days, don’t really know; Governor said stand by, focused more on metro area, what I’m hearing on state level

Mayor – protocols prob won't be relaxed anytime soon; don't have enough testing to know what our numbers are yet; propose purchase of 1000 face masks to Council to protect workers and citizens; it is recommended by CDC, give to all businesses that are open, available to shoppers; takes 2-3 weeks; improvise face mask until then

Councilperson Gadoua – not interested in telling others that they must wear them

Mayor – not going to enforce, making them available, encouraging safety

Councilperson Weidner – extra resource, that's great, if they don't have one, I'm all for it

Mayor – 1000 enough?

Councilperson Weidner agrees yes

Councilperson Gadoua – asked Jere, talking about the SBA loans?

Jere Johnson – yes, at length – economic impact; then CARES – whole separate entity; encouraging businesses to go local. Taylor Bank in full swing. Paycheck protection plan as well, could turn into a grant, not necessarily a loan for some businesses

Councilperson Gadoua – encourage businesses to act now, money will run out; short window

Jere Johnson – absolutely, has been a bottleneck; we're available, not experts; several of our businesses have applied, here and available for questions

ELECTION

Melissa Etnoyer, Chair Snow Hill Board of Elections; recommendation to postpone until 7/7/20.

Absentee ballot only, Eastern District only.

After being in contact with the board of Election Committee and Mr Karpinski, it is my recommendation to post-poner the election until July 7th. The election will be handled by mail in absentee ballot voting only. I am also recommending to only vote on the Eastern Council Seat, and defer the referendum until May 2021 election.

May 1st- Mass mailing to all in the Eastern Council District to inform them of the election process and deadlines for voting.

June 19th- Absentee ballot application postmark deadline

July 1st- If an Absentee ballot has been requested and they have not received one to call Town Hall

July 7th- Election, postmark deadline for absentee ballot

July 31st- Absentee ballot counting

There will need to be a resolution written to affirm these processes and dates to the Charter. If this is not acceptable, I will have to recommend that the Election be postponed until the quarantine is lifted and we can proceed as usual. This has been discussed via phone with the committee members, and was agreed upon unanimously.

Mayor – will speak to Karpinski, do charter amendment and resolution. Charter unclear.

Alison – newly elected person be sworn in at August town meeting? Yes. Taking referendum off ballot, is passed, Eastern Council person and Mayor would have to wait for raise until following year.

Melisa – agree should act on this sooner than later; pandemic indefinite, candidates campaign virtually, not sure how to do referendum

Mayor – referendum is important, not to put population at risk; ballots quarantined

Melissa – all have to be present at the same time (board)

Mayor – Eastern Dist – only 100 envelopes; if add referendum; don't have to decide at this moment; need to look into Charter, etc...

Melissa – made recommendation after Karpinski, who has been in many conversations, see pandemic going longer, at least into July before we see it peak; he recommended postponement; State is proposing mail-in also; took referendum off for safety because all on Board are in risk-age category; want to make sure that we're being safe, still don't know everything about this virus; according to Karpinski, just a quick write-up of a Resolution needed since Governor made proclamation

Mayor – clarifying – proposal – mitigating the amount of time to reduce risk

Melissa – half hour to go through 20 envelopes; looking at a couple hours at least, don't want to put them at more risk for longer periods if we add referendum

Mayor – watch Governor's findings and maybe there's a better, safer way, no contamination; but absolutely in support of Board's recommendations

Alison – governor said local towns have free reign and flexibility, thanks to Melissa for work and guidance

Mayor – have to wait until meeting?

Alison – no, if Kevin drafts Resolution we don't need to vote

BUDGET

Mayor – same, conversation with Chief and Don Giancoli; budget had funds for a part-time position/20 hrs /wk, budgeted; police officers have already doing clerical; leave it up to Chief's purview to hire who he needs; did not ask for an increase in budget; once I present it at TH mtg, still can be amended, still pass by July

Alison – fine with that as long as it stays there

Mayor – advertised yet? Margot Resto, yes, both Ordinances have been published

AUDITOR PROPOSALS

Two proposals received: TGM and PKS. Large difference in cost. Confident that both companies are vetted and capable companies. \$6K difference. Big difference over 3 years, for same work. Remind Council, also have Faw Casson are still part of our system since the fraud. TGM said that they would not have been able to catch that fraud in a regular audit. PKS was auditor at that time. Budget for Faw Casson decreased, working with Finance Manager who has gained skill

and experience from their training. Required by state, have to be audited. Do appreciate TGM, had opportunity to decrease proposal, but did not. Open to Council.

Alison wants to talk to Finance Manager regarding history with PKS. Some things we could have done a bit better from auditing side. All about saving money, but wants to discuss with Finance Manager.

Melisa – new for me, wasn't here. Agree, let's talk to Finance – may have insights that I'm not aware of.

Mayor – Alison – treasurer at the time, don't recall? Accountants didn't find it, why? I asked those same questions. Find out after the fact, PKS Federally accredited, reputable on the Eastern Shore. Also good to change up auditors. Such a huge discrepancy in cost. Absolutely agree to discuss more, put on Town Hall meeting agenda.

Alison – talk to Finance Manager. Don't want to speculate. Did have PKS for a long time.

Wouldn't make sense to go back to PKS, TGM only 2 yrs.

Mayor – cost discrepancy so large. Already have added protection with Faw Casson. If TGM can come down, no problem staying with them.

Alison – maybe TGM would come down.

Mayor – have no problem staying with TGM. It's about money, both are qualified and capable.

BUTTERFLY HOUSE

Alison - MOU – LSLT – mull it over, talk about it, if talking to Kevin, not sure if he got it?

Mayor – before sending to Kevin, have questions. More in detail than first presented. Need to get a lot more assurances. Agree, everybody scour it, make time at next Work Session to work on it. Don't want LSLT to lose interest, make sure it's fleshed out more completely.

Regular and consistent hours – means what? 1X month, 1x week, etc..

Termination of agreement – one-sided; what happens if one of us defaults?

Alison – at end of month, bring questions, comments; get with Attorney after that?

Mayor – yes, make sure it fits into strategic plan, Riverwalk design, want to protect all involved who is investing time, asked Grants Admin to look into funding for design; not about a 3 year project that goes away, really want it to be a lasting design;

Alison – LSLT said it was more of a 10 year; structure has to be more like a greenhouse; entryway would be a permanent structure that could serve in another capacity after hoop house goes away;

Mayor – is a 3 year MOU

Alison -agree it would need to be a longer agreement

COUNCIL

none

TOWN OFFICIALS

none

COMMENTS

Where could Candidates see information on Butterfly House?

Mayor – MOU isn't a finished document, needs to be fleshed out first. Once ready, it will come before public. We are 100% in support, still in discussion phase.

Fund raise for?

Mayor – yes. Research them before we put them out there. That would be in the MOU.

Council – has a donor packet ready to go. Original idea, if Town can provide funding, that would be wonderful. Seek donors as well, memorialize donors.

COVID – Town doing great job, vigilance important now. Governor said today about laundromat, small one. Today no signs on door about COVID 19.

Mayor – will take care of it. Margot and I made signs, will contact them.

Also have other laundromats in other buildings, might want to contact them.

Election – Melissa E, Alison, Melisa – want to thank them. Mayor has right to make an emergency proclamation. Three weeks ago, called and asked about this. Thank you for time and effort.

Voting – Town Meetings – have to be done over phone?

Mayor – yes, all meetings via telephone conference. Have not cancelled or missed any meetings.

Want people to know about voting taking place.

Maybe with COVID – purchase gloves as well.

Mayor - Glove is an interesting phenomenon. Are an extra protection. One-time use thing.

Cheaper at cash registers people taking money – making sure at every register there is a lot of hand sanitizer, between people. Will look into pricing.

Jere Johnson – reading a lot about cross-contamination with gloves; touching door handles, cell phone, unless sanitize, ineffective; hand washing most effective

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn, the motion received a Second. All in favor to adjourn. The time was 5:45 pm.